



# MONTANA ASSOCIATION OF LAND TRUSTS

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## TESTIMONY OF GLENN MARX, MONTANA ASSOCIATION OF LAND TRUSTS - APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE, JAN. 22, 2007

Mr. Chairman, my name is Glenn Marx and I am the executive director of the Montana Association of Land Trusts, an organization of 11 land trusts dedicated to private land conservation in Montana.

The Montana Association of Land Trusts supports the State Wildlife Grant Program and the state general fund match of \$500,000 for fisheries and \$500,000 for wildlife projects and programs.

It was the Republican U.S. President and the Republican U.S. Congress who in 2001 created the State Wildlife Grant Program. Since then Congress and the President have authorized \$400 million in federal spending across the nation and over \$5 million in Montana to find ways – and to fund ways – to improve management of sensitive species and their habitats.

Mr. Chairman, I don't know if Montana can improve management of sensitive species and their habitats, but I do know if Montana is going to do so, it will do so through this funding and through this program. The rules for sensitive species management were changed by the President and Congress, and the on-the-ground way these new rules are implemented is through the State Wildlife Grant Program.

The goal of the State Wildlife Grant Program is to fund comprehensive wildlife plans whose major purpose is to prevent Endangered Species Act listings. We in Montana have had more than our share of ESA program controversies, and with the State Wildlife Grants and the state general fund match we can render possible future ESA controversies mute by negating the need for listings.

By improving management of sensitive species and their habitats, these funds will be positive for wildlife, positive for landscapes, positive for landowners, positive for sportsmen, positive for rural communities and positive for rural economies.

It is historic for the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks to seek state general funds for wildlife management, and it is even more historic for the request to do so find favor in the executive spending plan submitted to the Legislature. But this one-time-only request makes fiscal and policy sense, in part because of the compelling need for the match of federal funds and because of the obligation for non-sportsmen in Montana to step up and help fund what in many ways is a non-sportsmen but pro-wildlife program. Montana's sportsmen always have and always will fund the department's wildlife management programs, and the request before you now is to allow Montana residents to chip in a contribution to a program which is the core program in the nation for helping sensitive species stay off the Endangered Species List.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify this morning.